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Dear Mr. Barnes:

Thank you for your letter of February 2 addressed to Secretary Enders in which you express your concern and that of your colleagues for Mr. John J. Sullivan, Jr., a missing American journalist in El Salvador.

In your letter, you requested a chronology of the actions the Embassy has taken in response to two letters which purported to offer information concerning Mr. Sullivan's disappearance. The first letter to which you refer was received by the Washington Post on October 20, and its contents passed to the State Department. In response to this letter, the Embassy placed an ad in the local newspapers asking the writer to contact the Embassy. An individual claiming to be the author did contact the Embassy regarding the letter and a scenario was devised in which he would appear at the American Embassy in a neighboring country. A person reported to the neighboring Embassy in accordance with the plan, but provided no further information. He was arrested shortly thereafter by local police after he had defrauded various local businessmen of at least a thousand dollars. Embassy officers spoke with this individual, who is still in jail, on two occasions, but he has not provided any verifiable information relating to Mr. Sullivan's disappearance. It is this background which led Ambassador Clinton to characterize the September 25th letter as an extortion attempt.

Following receipt of the December 9th letter, the Embassy again ran an ad in the local papers asking the writer of the letter to come forward. Two persons have responded to this ad, but neither knew anything of the text of the letter, nor had information on Mr. Sullivan. Although we can well understand the inclination of the family to accept these letters at face value since they seem to offer some glimmer of information in a tragedy that has gone over a year with no new facts coming to light, I hope you will understand that we

...Sincerely,

Michael G. Kozak,
Director, Office of Central American
Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 3/9/84
RDS or XD EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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and the Embassy would be less than responsible not to look at these letters and other alleged clues objectively. This includes, of course, attempting to verify the authenticity of these letters and the information they contain. The results of professional handwriting analysis indicates that both letters appear to have been written by the same person. We, unfortunately, do not know who that person is.

Of the three individuals interviewed in connection with the above letters, the information they have provided has been inaccurate, contradictory, or thus far unverifiable. However, our efforts to pursue these and other tenuous leads continue.

To date we have been unsuccessful in our efforts to resolve this case. I assure you however, this is not from a lack of concern or effort on the part of the Department or our Embassy in San Salvador. I hope this information is helpful. Should you desire a more detailed background, please feel free to contact our Citizens Emergency Center at 202-632-5225. That office will be happy to arrange a further briefing.

With cordial regards,

Sincerely,

Powell A. Moore
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

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